



U.S. Department of Justice

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## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **Woman Sentenced to 55 Years in Prison In Slaying of Her Seven-Year-Old Daughter - Defendant Stabbed Child, Then Set House on Fire -**

WASHINGTON - Carlese Hall, 31, of Washington, D.C., was sentenced today to 55 years in prison on charges stemming from the slaying in December 2008 of her seven-year-old daughter, U.S. Attorney Ronald C. Machen Jr. announced.

Hall was convicted by a jury in December 2010 of first degree felony murder and other charges, following a trial in the Superior Court of the District of Columbia. She was sentenced by the Honorable Michael L. Rankin.

According to the government's evidence, on December 26, 2008, at about 6:30 a.m., Hall approached Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) Officer Travis Coley, who was parked in the 3400 block of 13<sup>th</sup> Street SE. Hall, who was unclothed, asserted that she had killed her daughter and set her own house on fire. Hall then refused to provide the location of the house.

Officer Coley noticed that the defendant was bleeding from her chest area. Hall eventually gave her home address, in the 3300 block of 11<sup>th</sup> Place SE. The defendant, who appeared to be under the influence of drugs, was transported for medical treatment. Meanwhile, police discovered thick smoke when they arrived at the house. Members of the D.C. Fire and Emergency Medical Services Department responded and put out the fire.

Firefighter James Bobo discovered the body of the victim, Amari Hall, inside her bedroom in the single-family residence. The child was transported to Children's National Medical Center, where she was pronounced dead from a single stab wound to the chest. Further, an autopsy determined that the girl died from a stab wound which punctured her pulmonary artery.

At trial, the government presented evidence that Hall was under the influence of PCP at the time of her arrest. Evidence indicated that the fire was set no more than 15 minutes before Hall approached the police officer. The fire was started in Carlese Hall's bedroom.

The jury convicted Hall of charges of felony murder while armed, second degree murder while armed, first degree cruelty to children, arson, and felony destruction of property, as well as several aggravating circumstances based on the child's age and vulnerability.

In announcing the sentence, U.S. Attorney Machen praised the outstanding investigative efforts of those who worked on the case from MPD, including Detectives Carlos Hilliard, Gina Powell, Dean Combee, Michael Pavero, and Frank Molino; Sgts. Robert Parker and Buddy Smallwood; Fire Investigator James Taylor; Officers Travis Coley, Myisha McConoughey, Roderick Saunders, Conrad Olszak, Michael Bryant, Thomas Ellingsworth, and Dereck Phillip, and Mobile Crime Technicians James Savage, Thomas Coughlin, Dwayne Mitchell, Brenda Floyd and Charles Graham. In addition, Mr. Machen commended the work of Lt. Jeffrey Thorne, Firefighters Sean Tracy, Charles Ryan, James Bobo, Warren Deavers, Firefighter/EMT James McCoy, and Paramedic Matthew Sandy, all of the D.C. Fire and Emergency Medical Services Department.

He also noted the assistance of Dr. A. Wayne Williams, formerly of the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner of the District of Columbia, as well as Analysts Nikia Coomber, Harold Deadman, and Jennifer Zeffer, of the Metropolitan Police Department, Analyst Lisa Schwenk of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, and the U.S. Secret Service.

Mr. Machen also commended those who worked on the case from the U.S. Attorney's Office, including Criminal Investigators Durand Odom and John Marsh; Paralegal Specialist Kwasi Fields; Litigation Services Specialists Leif Hickling and Paul Howell, and Victim Advocate Marcia Rinker. He also thanked Assistant United States Attorney Deborah Sines, who assisted in the initial investigation. Finally, Mr. Machen acknowledged the work of Assistant United States Attorneys Thomas A. Gillice and Erin O. Lyons, who tried the case.